



HOW TO...

Manage disk partitions

Creating partitions can help you organise data and survive computer disasters. **Patrick Mundy** shows you how to divide and conquer using **Partition Manager 2005**, which is free with this month's cover disc



If you've got a large hard disk – and particularly if it's new and still quite empty – you should definitely consider dividing it into partitions. Partitioning allows a disk to be divided up into smaller sections. Rather than formatting a 160GB disk as one huge drive, you can create two 80GB partitions and it will appear in My Computer as two completely separate drives. This will give you all kinds of advantages, enabling you to organise different file types neatly and assisting you with backups and restores.

Paragon Partition Manager 2005 Personal Edition, the full version of which is included on this month's cover disc, is extremely useful when you're upgrading your hard disk. Here we'll show you how to use the software to set up a new hard disk prior to use. But even if you don't have a new disk, you can mix and match the techniques used here to meet your specific needs.

Before using Partition Manager, you are advised to use the Diskette Build Wizard to make a bootable floppy disk from which you can run the software. You'll find this wizard in the Paragon folder in the Start menu. This will be essential if you run into problems, because mistakes with partitions can mean Windows won't boot. The wizard will request files from a Windows bootable floppy; if you don't have one, download the Windows 98 OEM disk image from www.bootdisk.com/bootdisk.htm and run it. Copy Ramdrive.sys from the floppy and then download the Windows 95 Original image from the same site. Write this image to the floppy and copy Ramdrive.sys back on to the floppy.

1 In last month's *PC Builder* we showed you how to install a new hard disk. Once it is physically installed, you can turn on your PC, install Paragon Partition Manager 2005 from the cover disc and run it.

The centre of the screen shows a graphical map of your hard disk or disks and the relative sizes of the partitions. If you have two or more hard disks inside your PC, you must first resize this display so you can see them all at once. Simply click the border between this and the section below and drag it down.

To copy your old hard disk's contents to your new one, or to duplicate any partition, click on the bar that represents the partition you want to copy and click the Copy button in the toolbar. In the dialog box that appears, select the destination disk in the drop-down list, leave the other options on their defaults and click OK. Partition Manager won't start copying straight away; commands are executed only when you click the Apply button.

2 The Resize function allows you to change a partition's size without affecting its contents. As our new hard disk is bigger than our old one, we want to expand the size of the partition we've just created. You can do this by clicking and dragging either end of its bar on the graphical display. If you prefer to specify exact numbers, select the partition you want to adjust, click the Resize button and type in a new size in the dialog box that appears. You might not want to use the disk's entire capacity, as you'll see in the next steps. For now, choose 40GB, then click OK.

3 We recommend keeping user files such as office documents, photos and MP3s in a separate partition. Then, if Windows goes horribly wrong and won't boot, you can reformat your Windows partition without losing your files. Click on the unpartitioned space after the Windows partition, marked Free, then click the Create button. Set the size you want, make sure Primary is selected in the drop-down list and the Format new partition option is ticked, then click OK.

4 In the next dialog box, you choose how the partition is formatted. Type in a suitable name such as DATA and, if you're running Windows XP, select NTFS as the system type. Users of earlier versions of Windows should select FAT32. Click OK, and click Yes to the warning that appears.

5 When you've made all the necessary changes, click Apply to carry them out. Allow the software to restart the PC if it asks to do so. Finally, switch off your PC and set your new hard disk so it's the master disk on the Primary IDE channel; this tells Windows to boot from this disk. If it's a Serial ATA (SATA) disk, you'll have to adjust your BIOS settings.

6 Reassign your My Documents folder so Windows programs store files in your new partition. Right-click the My Documents icon and select Properties. Click the Move button in the box and browse to your new DATA partition. Click Apply, and Yes when asked if you want Windows to copy your current documents across. **ES**

